

Fair Housing Commission Meeting Minutes
July 24, 2019
Municipal Office Annex/Conference Room B

Commissioners Present: Elin Ross, Commission Chair
Nelson Zahler
Michael Brown
Andrea Mayer

Commissioners Absent: Catherine Dorsey, Excused

Staff Present: Eileen Barnhard, CDBG Program Administrator
Brandon Mark, Division Manager of Community Planning
and Urban Design
Saundra Nickols, City Attorney

The meeting was called to order at 2 PM by the Fair Housing Commission Chair, Elin Ross.

The Chair asked the Commission to review the February 2019 Draft Minutes; motion by Andrea Mayer to accept Minutes as presented and seconded by Nelson Zahler, all voted in favor.

Chair inquired if any Commission Members have completed their Open Meetings Act training to which Commissioner Michael Brown offered his certificate of completion and copy was kept by city staff including legal department for record keeping.

Commission tabled the items to review procedures and proposed revisions to the Housing Discrimination Ordinance until the next meeting.

Discussion on intake form review led by Andrea Mayer who suggested the form include the question of evidentiary support when making the complaint alleging fair housing discrimination. Andrea will make the changes on the form; send to the staff who will forward to the legal department for review and approval.

Fair Housing Commission Mission statement was drafted by Andrea Mayer and read aloud. She will send the draft version to staff to forward to the legal department for review and approval; it will then be voted on for adoption by the Commission.

City Attorney Saundra Nickols introduced herself and was available for Commission questions and review of documents generated by the Commission in accordance with the Housing Discrimination Ordinance.

Commission drafted a Fair Housing rack card to offer information on fair housing which could be easily given out at meetings or have placed in a rack display at various locations for public use. Revisions to

include the definition of fair housing on the front panel with explanation of fair housing detailed on the rest of the card; once the revisions are made, it will be forwarded to staff/legal department for review and approval; the card will then be voted upon by the Commission for adoption.

Commission would like to promote their existence by attending NAC meetings with the concept of introducing citizens to the purpose of the Fair Housing Commission and hand out of rack card. Commissioner Elin Ross will check the NAC schedule and will discuss further at next meeting.

Introduction of Brandon Mark, Division Planning Manager to discuss the 2020 Comprehensive Plan; he explained the purpose of the document which encompasses many facets of the community such as transportation, housing, zoning and the environment. He is seeking input from the Commission and asked they complete the online survey cityoffrederick.com/2020compplan. This survey will be available online until mid-fall. The draft plan will be sent to the Commission prior to the presentation to the Mayor and Board of Aldermen for their comments.

Commissioner Nelson Zahler stated the impediments to affordable housing lack incentives for developers. He expressed waiving of fees such as water hook-up, sewer and park fees (which the City collects) would assist in creating more affordable housing.

Commissioner Andrea Mayer had read the 2010 Comprehensive Plan and felt it was well designed. Her one suggestion was that it would be helpful to include information about housing patterns related to classifications protected under the City of Frederick's fair housing policies, such as race and national origin. The 2010 Comprehensive Plan contained data about housing patterns related to income, which can sometimes be used as a proxy for studying housing patterns related to other demographic criteria. However, to better understand housing patterns, it is important to include data about protected classifications. Brandon acknowledged this and will use mapping software to identify and broader considerations of this could be used for transportation as well.

In closing, Commissioner Nelson Zahler asked staff how many complaints have been received by the City alleging housing discrimination since the last meeting held in February 2019. As of July 24, 2019, no complaints have been made to the City of Frederick alleging housing discrimination. He requested that this information be part of the Commission's meeting protocol.

Next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday October 23, 2019 at 2 PM.

Motion to Adjourn made by Nelson Zahler, seconded by Michael Brown, all were in favor.

Meeting ended at 2:40 PM